

April 24, 2018

The Honorable Christopher Wray  
Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20535-0001

Director Wray:

On behalf of the American Council on Education (ACE) and the undersigned higher education associations, I am writing today to express our concern that the National Security Higher Education Advisory Board (NSHEAB) has been disbanded, and to request a meeting with the relevant national security agencies, including the FBI, in a forum comparable to the NSHEAB to discuss national security issues that intersect with higher education. Together, ACE and the undersigned higher education associations represent approximately 4,300 two- and four-year public and private nonprofit colleges and universities.

From 2005 until its recent disbandment, the NSHEAB served as an important forum for discussion of national security issues between leaders of the higher education community and federal agencies, including the FBI, the CIA, the NSA, the Office of National Intelligence, and the Department of Defense. During that time, it was a key conduit for higher education to raise security concerns and discuss sensitive security issues with relevant Executive Branch officials. The NSHEAB also provided the higher education community the opportunity to share, in turn, issues of importance to our community, such as academic freedom, scholarly exchanges, and global partnerships.

We are mindful of recent heightened security concerns regarding international students, including the views expressed by several witnesses during the April 11, 2018, House Science Subcommittee on Oversight and Subcommittee on Research and Technology Hearing, "Scholars and Spies: Foreign Plots Targeting America's Research and Development." We also are cognizant of your own recently expressed security concerns regarding Chinese students at U.S. universities and colleges. While we believe that international students and scholars contribute much to our country, we are anxious to do our part to ensure that America's security is protected. Accordingly, we believe it is more vital than ever to have a mechanism in place that allows for regular, constructive dialogue between higher education and the relevant federal agencies about national security issues.

The higher education community has long partnered with the federal government in addressing these matters. "As part of the government-university partnership, U.S. universities share a responsibility with the federal government to ensure that research

conducted under their auspices contributes to our national defense and homeland security. Each must work to ensure that the fruits of this research are appropriately secured and protected from outside intrusion or theft by foreign actors and/or governments.”<sup>1</sup>

In order to nurture and sustain this crucial partnership, it is critical to provide an appropriate forum for the higher education community and the key national security agencies to discuss common concerns. For all the reasons stated above, we request a meeting with the relevant national security agencies, including the FBI, in a forum comparable to NSHEAB where these important issues once again can be addressed.

I would be happy to meet with you to further discuss this subject.

Sincerely,



Ted Mitchell  
President

On behalf of:

American Association of Community Colleges  
American Association of State Colleges and Universities  
American Council on Education  
Association of American Universities  
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges  
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area  
Council of Graduate Schools  
Council of Independent Colleges  
Council on Governmental Relations  
EDUCAUSE  
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)  
NAFSA: Association of International Educators  
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

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<sup>1</sup> April 11, 2018, Joint Statement of ACE, Association of American Universities, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, and the Council on Governmental Relations to the House Science Committee: <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Community-Statement-House-SST-Committee-Hearing.pdf>